

Welcome to Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service's consultation on its future plans for the service.

The consultation period runs until the end of January 2004 and we would like to hear your views. Let us know what you think about the future of your Fire and Rescue Service.

As part of the Government's national modernisation programme for the Fire and Rescue Service, every Fire Authority in the country is required to produce a strategic Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

The Government has also published guidance on how fire authorities are to re-focus their policies and operating standards for service delivery, placing an emphasis on the prevention of fire and other emergencies first, balanced by a risk-based approach to the deployment of an emergency response in those situations where an incident occurs.

For the first time, the fire and rescue service is to be formally recognised as a provider of a comprehensive range of protection services to the community, which is a departure from the historical and previously narrow statutory base for a firefighting service. These wider services are to be delivered in partnership with a range of other agencies already operating in the community. It is through developing and strengthening our partnership approach with organisations that we aim to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the local community.

As part of the consultation process, the views of everyone who will be affected by the plan are being sought. In addition to the strategic plan, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service has prepared a draft Action Plan for the first year of the IRMP (2004-2005) which sets out the programme of improvements which Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service wants to carry out.

All the comments that we receive from stakeholders will be taken into account and incorporated into a final version, which will be submitted to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority for approval during March 2004.

The full version of the Strategic IRMP and Year One Action Plan can be found in full on the Brigade website at www.rbfrs.co.uk. You can request your own copy of the plan by calling 0118 932 2122.

If you would like to comment on the Strategic IRMP and the Action Plan, you may do so in the following ways:

Write to the Survey Officer, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, 103 Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4FS

Email via irmp@rbfrs.co.uk

*Please remember to include your **age, gender and town or parish** (not name or address) to help us in collating the survey results. To ensure your comments are received in time for consideration please ensure they are returned no later than January 31st 2004.*